

Amendments to the specification

[0019] The present invention adds functionality to cochlear implant and/or implantable hearing aid devices and systems without adding substantial weight or size to these associated devices or systems to their associated, head-mounted, external components. The present invention accomplishes this by providing an Assistive Listening Device (ALD) Cap that is placed on top of a headpiece that is associated with a Behind-the-Ear (BTE) unit. Alternately, the ALD Cap is placed on top of the head-mounted external components associated with a cochlear implant or hearing aid system that does not use a BTE unit. The ALD Cap communicates with the BTE unit or other external components directly or through an auxiliary attachment, e.g., an earhook, attached to the BTE unit. The ALD Cap contains electronics that supplement or replace the functionality of the BTE unit or ~~other~~ head-mounted external components.

[0029] Users of BTE units can wear the present invention by attaching an ALD Cap to the exterior of a headpiece and wearing either an earhook and/or BTE unit with a cable connection, an earhook and/or BTE unit with an RF or other communications receiver, or any other earhook and/or BTE unit. Users of head-mounted external component units can wear the present invention by attaching an ALD Cap to the exterior of an external component unit. To use the present invention, users simply turn the power on the ALD Cap and place it on top of their existing headpiece or ~~other~~ external component unit. The ALD Cap then receives RF or other signals and transmits them either to an earhook, a BTE unit, external head-mounted components, or other hearing system components via wire (including direct contact) or wireless signals.

[0030] Having an RF or other communications-based receiver in the earhook, body of the BTE unit, external component unit, or implanted components allows for a range of assistive listening technologies to be developed and integrated into ALD Caps. These caps can be interchangeable to meet different assisted listening device needs of users.

The caps may reduce the weight and size of any BTE unit on a user's ear while providing maximum functionality to the user's listening device. In other applications or embodiments, the ALD Caps completely eliminate the need for a BTE unit by carrying components that otherwise would have been carried by a BTE unit. The simple connection of an ALD Cap to a headpiece or other external component unit and of a connection cable to an earhook and/or BTE unit does not require the user to remove the BTE device or external component unit in order to place the ALD Cap. Finally, the minimal addition of the ALD Cap to the headpiece or other external component unit remains aesthetically agreeable for users.